

# Bag of Rocks

## Part 1:

Place the backpack (bag) in the center of the circle, and state **this bag is going to help us answer a very important question, “How do people get better from drugs & alcohol?”** Write the question on the board.

Ask each child to pick up the bag (by the small handle on top) and walk over to the door and back. As they pick up the bag talk about the weight of it by making an observation or asking a question or two.

- Wow, you looked surprised when you picked up the bag.
- That looks so heavy.
- You weren't expecting it to feel that way, huh?
- How would you feel (point to feeling faces on wall) if I told you that you would have to wear this bag on your back every day for the rest of your life?
- If it's not possible to let go of the bag, could you run really fast? Or play soccer? Or play football?
- If you were playing on a team, how do you think your team mates would feel about you?
- Could you ride your bike if you had to carry the bag with one hand and couldn't ever let it go?
- If you had to carry this bag all day long, along with your backpack, and go to school, what kind of mood would you be in at the end of the day?
- If you had to sleep with it all night and couldn't let it go, what kind of a mood would you wake up in?

## Part 2:

Once all of the children have had the opportunity to carry the bag, tell them, **“We all have a bag like this on the inside. You can't see it but you can feel it. And guess what? Each of your parents/grandparents/aunts/uncles carries around a bag just like this. How long do you think they have been carrying this bag around?”**

Let the kids answer ... they might say something like “since they started drinking” or “since my parents got divorced” or “when I was born”. You will respond by saying **“Actually they have been carrying their bag around since they were little kids maybe even younger than you. So, could anything in this bag ever be your fault? NO WAY!”**

**“This is really heavy and I don't like the way it feels. I want to just put it down, but it's on the inside and I can't. What is a bad choice I can make to get rid of it?”** Kids hopefully will say, drinking or using drugs. Pretend to drink and then begin to lower the bag to the ground and talk about how drugs and alcohol can make the bag feel lighter and can even make it feel like it's totally gone. Put bag on ground and model how free and nice it feels to not have to carry that

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bag around, wow does it feel good! **“But do drugs and alcohol eventually wear off? Yes! And now my bag is even .... Heavier! Because I made some really bad choices ... (examples) What do I do now? I drink more or use more drugs and eventually my bag goes to sleep again but then the drugs and alcohol wear off and my bag is even heavier! Eventually there is not enough drugs or alcohol to make the bag go away and it is stuck with me and I can’t get rid of it. Put bag in lap. This is usually when people ask for help and go to rehab or AA meetings ... when they are in a safe place with safe people they might even begin to take some things out of their bag to make it lighter. Sometimes they even sit in a circle just like this and talk about what is inside their bag.**

## **Part 3:**

**When you have a really heavy bag and want to make it lighter, what should you do? LET IT OUT! That’s right. Each one of you is going to get a chance to take something out of the bag and we’ll decide what to do with it. I’m going to go first.”**

As each child pulls a rock out of the bag, give an example of why someone with addiction might feel this way. Use stories that kids might have shared during share square or introductions if possible. Then ask them **“If someone is having trouble with drugs and alcohol what should they do with their angry, sad, scared, etc. feelings? Keep them in or let them out?”**

## **Feelings**

- Angry – Is it ok to be angry? Even with people you love?
- Disappointed
- Scared – Afraid of someone or the future
- Embarrassed
- Ashamed – Feeling bad about who you are or where you come from
- Guilty - Feeling bad about something you think you did
- Hurt – On the inside or outside
- Confused
- Worried
- Sad – Can boys cry?
- Lonely – Can you feel alone even around other people?

## **Family Problems**

- Fights
- Abuse – cover all types of abuse
- Addiction

**Secrets** – What is the difference between good and bad secrets?

**“How does the bag feel now? Lighter!”** Reference stories from part one.

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Have the children help you classify the rocks into the following three categories:

- FEELINGS (11) – angry, scared, embarrassed, ashamed, guilty, hurt, confused, sad, lonely, worried
- FAMILY PROBLEMS (3) – fights, abuse, addiction
- SECRETS (1)

Go back to the board and write the answer to the question **“How do people get better from drugs & alcohol? Let it out! Talk about it!”**

Go back to the middle of the circle. **“Let’s pretend I went through Five Star Kids and then came home from school on Monday and found my dad drinking beer. I might feel angry, confused and worried.”** Pick 3 or 4 rocks and put them back in the bag. **“What is happening to my bag? It’s getting heavy! What should I do? Let it out! So I call my friend Ms. Kyle and I talk to her about how angry and confused and worried I am feeling about my dad drinking.”** As you are saying this remove the rocks from the bag. **“So it’s important to remember that everyone has a bag of rocks and in order to stay healthy we all have to Let It Out!”**